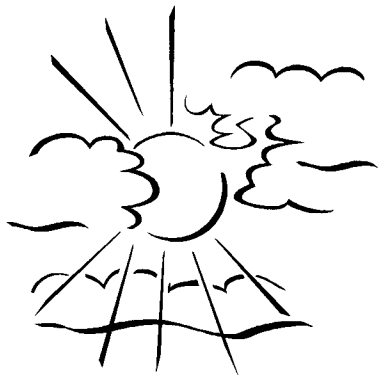


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(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Thursday, September 1, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Published September 1, 2005

# Lawmakers pass tougher sex offender restrictions More background checks, pedophile-free zones added

By Kelly Hassett and Stacey Range  
Lansing State Journal

Sex offenders couldn't live or work within 1,000 feet of schools, and all teachers and other school staff would have to pass criminal background checks under legislation approved Wednesday by Michigan lawmakers. The bills were passed overwhelmingly as part of a sweeping package aimed at safeguarding children in schools and day cares.

"This is strong and meaningful legislation to protect our most vulnerable citizens," Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, said. "School is a place to learn, not to be preyed upon." Toy's bill expands the state's pedophile-free zones around schools from 500 feet to 1,000 feet. It would not apply to offenders who already live or work near schools.

Other measures toughen penalties for sex offenders who fail to register with the state, require schools to withhold pay from teachers charged with crimes and require school employees to notify administration officials if they're charged with a crime.

Notification now is required only if a school employee is convicted.

The bills, expected to be sent to Gov. Jennifer Granholm next week, received mixed reaction.

Parents and school officials praised the action.

"It's not a perfect solution, but I think we need to err on the side of protecting children," said Grand Ledge resident Ruthann Jaquette, who has three children in the Grand Ledge school district.

But some argue that the living and working restrictions perpetuate punishment of people who already have served their time.

"I believe the residency bills to be unnecessary and ill conceived," Linda Zimmerman, a spokeswoman for Citizens for Second Chances, said in a written response. The Michigan-based group supports families of people convicted of or charged with sex crimes.

"We all wish to keep children safe, I just don't believe that the residency bills will do that," Zimmerman said.

## Checks at schools

One of the most anticipated bills in the package requires schools to conduct background checks on all employees and contract workers - not just teachers and administrators.

## Public registry

- Michigan's Sex Offender Registry went into effect in 1995 and contains an online list of sex offenders, their convictions and addresses.

- There are about 36,000 convicted sex offenders in Michigan. The state's public registry includes about 19,000 who are required by law to tell police where they live at least once each year.

- Michigan's Sex Offender Registry can be found at [www.mipsor.state.mi.us](http://www.mipsor.state.mi.us).

It also prevents schools from employing anyone convicted of certain crimes against children, including sexual offenses.

Granholm and lawmakers started working on the legislation earlier this year after a state auditor general report showed that 222 licensed school workers - mostly teachers - had criminal records. The state didn't know about 178 of them.

Five employees had convictions for robbery, assault and criminal sexual conduct, and others had been arrested for shoplifting or alcohol-related crimes.

Granholm praised the Legislature's passage of the bills.

"Michigan will not rest until we have done everything we can to keep the 'bad guys' away from our children," Granholm said in a written statement.

Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd said lawmakers now must figure out how the background checks will be funded. Each will cost schools \$55 to \$70.

William Mayes, executive director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators, said the background checks would help.

"We have people who change their name or change their middle initial," Mayes said. "We support strong laws that require background checks."

But John La Fond, law professor emeritus with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, said the new bills - like others passed nationwide - are a "symbolic gesture" that will have no impact on sexual offender recidivism.

"There's no evidence that sexual offenders seek out victims near their homes," said La Fond, who recently wrote the book "Preventing Sexual Violence: How Society Should Cope with Sex Offenders."

"Politicians can pass these laws and proclaim they have taken effective steps, but they're nothing more than futile gestures," he said.

#### **'Vulnerable' first**

Lansing parent and school board candidate Daniel Dillinger said there's some merit to the argument that offenders have rights, "but as a society we should be much more concerned about our children's rights than a (sex offender's) rights," he said. "They're the most vulnerable."

Dillinger, who has two children in fifth and eighth grades at Pleasant View Magnet School, would like the 1,000-foot ban extended to other areas, such as school bus routes and stops.

"One thousand feet seems not that far," he said, "but it's better than 500."

Jaquette, the Grand Ledge mom, said that while a law helps, she knows it won't stop every criminal from slipping through the cracks.

"It's probably the biggest fear in the heart of any parent," she said, adding that children "don't get a second chance at being innocent."

Contact Stacey Range at 377-1157 or [srange@lsj.com](mailto:srange@lsj.com). Contact Kelly Hassett at 267-1301 or [khassett@lsj.com](mailto:khassett@lsj.com).

#### **Lawmakers pass sex-offender bills**

Michigan lawmakers passed a package of bills Wednesday aimed at making schools safer by further restricting child sex offenders. Most would take effect when they're signed by Gov.

Jennifer Granholm. Some highlights:

- **Pedophile-free zone:** Certain sex offenders wouldn't be allowed to live, work or loiter within 1,000 feet of a school - an increase from 500 feet. Exemptions include anyone who now works or lives in the new restriction area, those younger than 19 who live with their parents, and offenders whose home or work is in the zone because the school expands. Violators could get up to a year

in jail and a \$1,000 fine for the first offense.

- Teacher checks: School districts and day cares would be required to check teachers and other employees for criminal backgrounds, and couldn't hire anyone convicted of child sexual offenses.
- Notification: Teachers and school employees charged with a variety of crimes against children would have to report their charges to their school within three days. Current law requires them to notify officials only if they're convicted.
- Teacher pay: Schools would have to stop paying teachers charged with crimes against children, including sexual offenses. Acquitted teachers would get back pay plus interest.
- Reporting: Sex offenders who don't report an address change now can be charged with a misdemeanor and get up to 93 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Under new legislation, second offenses would result in up to a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine. A third offense would be a four-year felony. It would take effect Jan. 1.
- Evidence: Prosecutors in trials against defendants accused of sex crimes against children would be able to use as evidence the defendant's criminal history if it includes similar crimes.

August 31, 2005

## **REVISED SAFETY INITIATIVE WINS SENATE, HOUSE APPROVAL**

Senate and House action on Wednesday all but completed work on a student safety initiative that establishes new procedures designed to keep sex offenders and certain felons away from children.

The bills approved – all by unanimous or near-unanimous votes in both chambers – set safety zones around schools where sex offenders are barred, require teachers to report any charges against them for sex offenses or other felonies and establish requirements for regular criminal background checks of applicants and employees at schools and day care centers. The Senate and House had earlier passed their own versions of the multibill package, which is now combined to include bills from each.

Governor Jennifer Granholm welcomed the votes, saying, “This legislation will ensure that our children are safe in child care facilities, camps, schools, and while participating in extracurricular activities.”

“I’d like to say these actions aren’t necessary but we’re reminded everyday that they are,” said Rep. Bill Caul (R- Mount Pleasant), sponsor of one measure in the package.

Included in bills approved by the Senate was the 1,000-foot safety zone around school property (HB 4932), keeping those persons who are on the state’s sex offender registry from living, working or loitering in those zones.

A wider one-mile safety zone, in SB 129 approved by the House, applies to those convicted of child sexual assault for the duration of their probation.

The revised approach splits the restrictions into two bills: one dealing with persons residing near schools (SB 617) and another dealing with provisions on working and loitering (HB 4932). The legislation provides exemptions for those already living in the restricted area and allows intermittent work assignments as long as the ex-offender has no contact with school children.

Teachers convicted of felonies or some misdemeanors face a range of requirements under HB 4928. The bill requires pay to be discontinued (rather than escrowed as in earlier versions) to teachers accused of sex offenses, with repayment plus interest provided if not convicted, and requires the departments of State Police and Information Technology to develop a program to allow monthly checks of persons with teaching certificates against State Police criminal records. That system is expected to be running by November and the Department of Education is to conduct its own quarterly background checks until

then. School employees would have until July 1, 2008 to provide fingerprints for criminal background check purposes.

Two bills would require childcare providers to undergo criminal records and history checks and would punish providers who don't report sex offenses. HB 4936 would expand existing requirements that childcare providers seeking a license undergo criminal history background checks by using the State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation agencies to conduct the screenings. HB 4958 would make it a two-year felony for committing crimes described in SB 615 and HB 4936, including failing to report any crime listed in the Sex Offender Registration Act.

Other bills passed by the Senate include:

- SB 616 providing sentencing guidelines for violations of the school safety zone restriction.
- HB 4402 requiring schools to conduct State Police and FBI criminal background checks of applicants, barring the hiring of sex offenders, and requiring a superintendent and the school board to specify their approval of hiring persons with felony convictions.
- HB 4930 requiring school employees to report within three business days of any charges brought against them for sex offenses. The reports to the Department of Education and local superintendent had been required within one day in earlier versions. The employees would also have to report convictions to the prosecutor, superintendent of public instruction and district. Failure to abide by the reporting requirements would itself be a crime.
- HB 4991 making revisions to the Teacher Tenure Act to comply with requirements under the self-reporting bill.
- HB 4934 providing penalties for failure of those on the state's sex offender registry to make regular required reports.
- HB 4937 permitting use as evidence a prior sex offense for persons accused of a sex crime against a minor.
- HB 4957 setting sentencing guidelines for persons with sex offenses who accept jobs or volunteer at schools, day care centers or youth organizations.

In the Senate, the bills had earlier been approved by Education and Families and Children Services committees.

Bills passed by the House include:

- SB 601 requiring criminal background checks of school employees and prohibiting those with certain sex offenses from working in the schools.
- SB 609 limiting the protections of the Teacher Tenure Act to teachers convicted of sex offenses.

- SB 611 setting sentencing guidelines for failure by school employees to report convictions.
- SB 606 and SB 607 setting penalties and sentencing guidelines for failure to make reports required for those listed on the sex offenders registry.
- SB 615 requiring criminal background checks for child care licensees, employees and contract workers.

# **Bills Protecting Children From Sex Offenders Approved**

## ***Legislation Would Require Background Checks On School Employees***

POSTED: 1:51 pm EDT August 31, 2005

LANSING, Mich. -- Legislation aimed at safeguarding children from sex offenders in schools and day care centers is headed to Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

State senators on Wednesday unanimously signed off on a number of child safety bills, including one that would bar registered sex offenders from living or working within 1,000 feet of a school. Other parts of the multi-bill package, approved 36-0 by the Senate, would require background checks on school and day care employees, and penalize those employees who don't report crimes in their past. School districts would have to suspend the teaching certificate of anyone convicted of various sex crimes.

The legislation also would stiffen penalties for sex offenders who don't report information to law enforcement.

A state auditor general report released last year showed that 222 licensed school workers, mostly teachers, had criminal records, and that the state did not know about 178 of them. Five employees had convictions for robbery, assault and criminal sexual conduct. Others had been arrested for shoplifting or alcohol-related offenses.

Republican Sen. Nancy Cassis of Novi and Democrat Michael Switalski of Roseville were absent and didn't vote.

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*Wayne Briefs*  
*Detroit News*  
*September 1, 2005*

Wayne County

## 9 unregistered sex offenders nabbed

In a three-day sweep of convicted sex offenders, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office found eight parolees and a probationer who had failed to notify authorities of new addresses. As a part of Operation Trackdown, officers visited the homes of 197 known sex offenders in Detroit, Dearborn, Canton Township, Inkster, Livonia, Taylor and Westland. A 48-year-old Dearborn man and a 68-year-old Detroit man were discovered to have violated the terms of their probation. The office notified the state Department of Corrections, where additional charges or sentences may be determined, said John Roach, spokesman for the Sheriff's Office.

Michigan Report

August 31, 2005

## **HOUSE OKS VIDEO GAME BILL**

Bills promoted as curbing minors access to violent and sexually-oriented video games cleared the House on Wednesday.

The main bills (SB 416, SB 463) prohibit the sale or renting of a video game rated “mature” or “adults-only” to minors with violations resulting in up to a \$5,000 fine and one year in jail.

The other two bills (HB 4702, HB 4703) would require video game retailers to post a sign in the store providing information about the video game rating system. The legislation also seeks to make clear that it is illegal to sell a sexually explicit video game to minors although current law could be interpreted as already prohibiting such sales.

# **Police: Man Attempted To Pull Teen Into Woods**

## ***Girl Threatens To Call Police On Cell Phone***

POSTED: 2:45 pm EDT August 31, 2005

A 14-year-old girl reportedly had a frightening encounter with a stranger while walking near a wooded area in Ann Arbor Tuesday.

The Pioneer High School student said she was walking in the 1900 block of West Liberty Street at about 4 p.m. when a man grabbed her and attempted to pull her into Eberwhite Woods, police told the *Ann Arbor News*.

The girl said she was walking to meet her mother at Dicken Elementary School when she spotted the man in the woods, the paper reported. According to police reports, the teen said she picked up her pace, but the man approached her and grabbed her from behind. The man let her go after she told him she had a cell phone and threatened to call police, according to the paper.

The girl reported the incident to her mother, who contacted Ann Arbor police.

The man was described as black with a light complexion, 5 feet 10 inches tall, with short dark hair and a dark or black T-shirt.

Anyone with information is asked to call Ann Arbor police at (734) 994-2911.

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# Woman held until exam on Tuesday

*September 1, 2005*

BY TALIA BUFORD  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A woman who disappeared after leaving her child with a Lincoln Park motel housekeeper was arraigned Wednesday on a charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Star Schumake, 29, pleaded not guilty in 25th District Court to the misdemeanor offense, which carries a 90-day jail sentence and a \$500 fine.

Schumake turned herself in to Lincoln Park police on Monday afternoon after family and friends alerted her that pictures of her 2-year-old daughter were on television.

The child, whose name is not being released, remains in protective custody with the Michigan Department of Human Services.

"We're most concerned with having the right thing happen," said Detective William Sant'Angelo of the Lincoln Park Police Department. "Ultimately, the best thing has happened -- the child's not with her."

The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office said Schumake is a Detroit resident, though Lincoln Park police say she moves around a lot and also has lived in the Flint area.

During an interview with police, Schumake gave an account that differs from the report given by the housekeeper.

According to the housekeeper, Schumake had asked her to watch the toddler for a couple of hours around 9 p.m. Friday. But when she hadn't returned for the child by 11 p.m. Sunday, the housekeeper called police.

Schumake told police that she dropped her child off with the housekeeper around noon Thursday and had made arrangements with the woman to keep her daughter and that she intended to return.

The housekeeper told police that no such arrangements were made.

According to police, Schumake said she drove to Tennessee with her boyfriend after her Friday shift at the Atlantis Lounge on Dix Highway in Lincoln Park, where she works as an exotic dancer.

Schumake returned to the club around 11 p.m. Saturday before traveling to Flint. There, she worked a shift at another strip club before spending the night at a friend's house in the area. On Sunday morning, she was visiting her mother's home in Flint when she heard about the news coverage of her daughter.

Schumake is being held on \$500 cash bond at the Lincoln Park Police Department until her preliminary exam Tuesday.

"You'd think you wouldn't have to tell people that they're accountable for their children, but sometimes you do," Sant'Angelo said.

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# 17-year-old girl won't be charged after Amber Alert, authorities say

Thursday, September 01, 2005

By Lisa Medendorp  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

A 17-year-old girl who was apprehended by police following an Amber Alert issued Tuesday has been released from the Muskegon County Jail without being charged with a crime.

Muskegon police said this morning that Shelby Rae-Keith Smith was released late Wednesday afternoon after the Muskegon County Prosecutor's Office did not authorize a warrant.

Prosecutor Tony Tague said this morning that the Muskegon Police Department "presented no evidence of any type of criminal activity" on the part of Smith.

The Amber Alert had been issued for 5-year-old Lamiya Brown-Balogh, of 723 Louis. Her mother, Amy Balogh, reported her missing early Tuesday, authorities said.

The child was located unharmed in a car with Smith and a male friend about 11:30 a.m. Tuesday in Holton Township.

Tague said it appears there was confusion over the whereabouts of the child due to a situation at the mother's home that night. He said his office has referred the matter to the state Department of Human Services' Protective Services Division.

The prosecutor said he wants "an investigation into whether the home is an appropriate haven for the child and into whether there is possible drug use in the home."

Tague said Smith did not abduct the child, adding: "My office will be reviewing with the chief (Police Chief Tony Kleibecker) the protocol for activating the Amber Alert to make sure all the appropriate safeguards are in place."

The Amber Alert protocol has been set up by State Police.

Kleibecker said this morning he is "waiting to hear from Mr. Tague."

Tague said there had been a discussion between the mother and "her friend, Shelby," about taking the child the following day and also taking her to a pizza place. "Apparently, that conversation resulted in the confusion as to the whereabouts of the child," he said.

Smith, an acquaintance of the child's family, had been staying at the Louis Avenue home that night, police said earlier. The child's mother awoke about 3:45 a.m. to the sound of a car leaving her driveway and said she then discovered her child was missing.

Published September 1, 2005

## **Black Child and Family Institute looks to buy Verlinden School Group to make an offer today to school board Board to consider proposal for former school**

By Susan Vela  
Lansing State Journal

The Black Child and Family Institute is ready to buy its own home.

The Lansing-based non-profit is eyeing Verlinden Elementary School as its permanent home after leasing the Genesee Street School for the last 20 years. Verlinden was closed this summer.

Executive Director Emerson Sheffey plans to approach the Lansing school board tonight with a proposal to buy the westside school.

"It's just time," Sheffey said. "There's nothing like calling something your own."

The institute has housed after-school, summer-school, computer training and other services for the disadvantaged at Lansing's former Genesee Street School, 835 W. Genesee St., since soon after its 1986 start. The institute's lease is \$1 a year.

Sheffey said the institute considered buying Genesee from the district last year to expand its services but then learned that the school building needed \$1 million in repairs.

The organization's leaders turned their attention to Verlinden, less than a mile away, once the district began talking several months ago about closing it and four other schools.

Sheffey did not share details of his proposal.

Yet he promised to highlight what many don't know: "We serve the whole community."

Board members are interested to hear about the proposal.

The district has several closed schools to sell. Prices for some are close to \$400,000.

"They do provide a good service to the community," board member Guillermo Lopez said. And, "they have been partners a long time. I would welcome a proposal."

Board members said the district most likely would sell Genesee Street if it lost the institute as a tenant.

"We can't carry that overhead," board member Amy Hodgin said.

"We're still responsible for the building."

Delta Township resident Stelisha Foreman approves of the possible move to Verlinden, which she once attended. She visits the institute regularly so that she and her three boys can get food and nutrition education through a Women, Infants and Children program located there.

"The kids who come here deserve a better building," she said.

### **Tonight's meeting**

- The Black Child and Family Institute, 835 W. Genesee St., wants to buy Lansing School District's Verlinden Elementary School, 609 N. Verlinden Ave. A representative is expected to propose a purchase to the Lansing school board at tonight's 7 p.m. meeting at the district offices, 519 W. Kalamazoo St.

The Westside Neighborhood Association is just relieved that Verlinden's doors might swing open for children and families again. Members have been concerned about vandalism and blight since Verlinden closed.

The institute "seems like a natural fit," said Brian Huggler of the group. "No one wants to see ... Verlinden School sit vacant."

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or [svela@lsj.com](mailto:svela@lsj.com).

**About the institute**

- Founded: 1986
- Mission: To strengthen children and families
- Services: After-school tutoring, summer academy, adult computer literacy classes, financial literacy training, preschool story hour, parent education, health and physical education groups, basketball for adults and children
- Status: Nonprofit
- Funding: State, federal, grants and private contributions
- People helped: 3,000 each year
- For more information about the Black Child and Family Institute, go to [www.bcfi.org](http://www.bcfi.org).

***Macomb Briefs***

***Detroit News***

***September 1, 2005***

**Clinton Township**

**Grant to help promote child literacy**

The Michigan State University Extension Services office in Macomb County received a \$20,000 grant from the United Way for Southeastern Michigan's Women's Initiative program that focuses on improving child literacy rates. The grant will pay for a part-time staff person to carry out a home-based program that addresses early childhood literacy. The program is geared toward low-income children up to 4 years old. The program must serve at least 25 Macomb County families throughout the year, said Patricia A. Ellis, a United Way spokeswoman.



## Plea ends assault case

The teen accused of causing miscarriage by beating girlfriend will get probation.

*By Edward L. Cardenas / The Detroit News  
Thursday, September 1, 2005*

**MOUNT CLEMENS** -- A teenager accused of striking his pregnant girlfriend with a baseball bat and causing her miscarriage pleaded no contest Wednesday in Macomb Circuit Court. The 17-year-old Richmond Township youth, whose name is being withheld because of his age, was charged in January with assaulting a pregnant individual causing a miscarriage.

"It surprised us that it happened today. The fact he pleaded didn't surprise us at all," Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith said Wednesday.

With the possibility of local and national media attention if it went to trial, the teen's attorney decided to enter the plea during a hearing before Judge Matthew Switalski.

Prosecutors allege the teen struck his 16-year-old girlfriend in the stomach with a 22-inch miniature baseball bat over three weeks in early fall 2004.

The 6-month-old fetus died of premature birth associated with trauma to the mother, according to an autopsy by the Macomb County medical examiner.

Police learned about the incident in mid-November after the girl spoke about it while at a high school leadership conference in the Upper Peninsula.

The adult facilitator of the conference contacted the Michigan State Police. Detectives investigated the claim and went to the boyfriend's home, where they found the fetus buried.

He was charged with a felony, and because he is a juvenile, he would have been subject to jail time until he was 21.

Under conditions of the plea, the teen will be on probation until he is 19, and the prosecution will not seek jail time.

Miranda Massie, who is representing the youth, is glad he will likely only face two years of probation for the crime.

"The major consideration for us was how damaging a trial would be emotionally for the both of these people," Massie said.

*You can reach Edward L. Cardenas at (586) 468-0529 or [ecardenas@detnews.com](mailto:ecardenas@detnews.com).*

# **Teen Makes Plea In Girlfriend's Beating, Miscarriage**

## ***Boy Allegedly Used Baseball Bat In Planned Assault***

POSTED: 10:14 am EDT September 1, 2005

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich. -- A teenage boy accused of hitting his pregnant girlfriend with a baseball bat as part of their plan to make her miscarry has pleaded no contest and will avoid detention.

In January, the resident of Macomb County's Richmond Township was charged in juvenile court with intentional conduct against a pregnant individual resulting in miscarriage or stillbirth. If convicted, he could have been detained until age 21.

The boy, whose name is not being published, entered the plea Wednesday before Macomb County Juvenile Judge Matthew Switalski.

"Conditions of the plea are that the court will have jurisdiction over (the boy) until age 19 and that the prosecution will not seek incarceration of (him) at disposition," said a court document in the case.

The girl was 16 at the time her boyfriend allegedly beat her over about two weeks' time with a 22-inch souvenir baseball bat, causing her to deliver a roughly 6-month-old male fetus on Oct. 4, 2004.

Police learned about the matter after the girl spoke about it while at a high school leadership conference in the Upper Peninsula. An adult supervisor contacted state police.

Detectives went to the boyfriend's home, where they found the fetus buried.

Posted: 9-1-2005

## Lawmakers question governor's stance on GEO youth facility

By STEVE BEGNOCHE  
Daily News Managing Editor

State Rep. Geoff Hansen, R-Hart, and U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Holland, take issue with Gov. Jennifer Granholm's contention that the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin, operated by GEO Group, Inc., is not efficient and they are urging her not to cancel the 20-year contract.

The fear is if the contract is canceled, GEO will then close the prison and put the about 229 full time employees there out of work. The prison's operating budget for 2004 was \$13.4 million.

Granholm, Friday in Ludington, stated the Michigan Auditor General identified the prison as the least efficient in the state and said the offenders in the 480 beds there could be absorbed into Michigan Department of Corrections facilities.

Hansen said he understands the Auditor General report differently. He said if judged against other Level 5 prisons in Michigan, it is the second most efficient prison of that type in the state. He said the Auditor General was suggesting that the contract be renegotiated to allow the facility to operate at a lower level, thus reducing costs.

"They've got costs they would like to cut back, but we're not getting anywhere," he said.

The governor's office would not comment this morning on whether or not a renegotiation of the contract with GEO was possible. "Because we are in budget negotiations (with the Legislature), we will not discuss the details," Heidi Hansen of the governor's communication office said. "We can't comment on whether or not we would renegotiate, we can't speculate on that."

Rep. Hansen agreed budget negotiations are thick in Lansing this week. He said he talked to the governor during her visit to Pentwater Friday to explain his concerns. "They've got some costs they would like to cut back. We're not getting anywhere," he said.

As for the governor's suggestion that GEO look to federal prisoners to house in the facility, Rep. Hansen said, "I don't care who's in there. I just care that my people are working with good jobs."

He noted that federal funds were used for the infrastructure and that for the first time people in Lake County have a facility with good jobs in their county to employ county residents.

"It's the first time they didn't have to leave the county to work. They're coming to Baldwin to go to work," he said.

GEO, he said, spent \$4.5 million building the facility and counted on the 20-year contract.

Hoekstra, who will meet this afternoon with Lake County officials about the situation, this week sent a letter to Granholm about his concerns with canceling the contract.

"If the 480 bed facility is closed, Lake County and surrounding communities would lose 229 jobs and \$9 million in annual salaries," he said.

"The MYCF is Lake County's largest employer and a major source of economic stability. Shutting the facility would severely impact the quality of life not only of those directly employed by the facility, but on local suppliers that are working to complete and create jobs in an already challenging marketplace."

Rep. Hansen was more blunt.

"If this should happen and the state pulls the contract, the state better have a plan for receivership for Baldwin Schools, Lake County and Webber Township. They've been poor forever. They went out on a limb. They have a lot of debt in the infrastructure," he said. The facility pays \$1 million in taxes, including \$400,000 to Baldwin schools.

Hoekstra said he was unaware of any request to house federal prisoners there, but said if that is an avenue the state sees, the governor is going about it wrong. He said her calling the facility inefficient is no way to gain federal support to place federal prisoners there.

"The only immediate thing I could take a look at, is we have passed legislation for more detention space for illegal aliens," Hoekstra said. "Whether MYCF is ideally suited, I don't know."

Rep. Hansen also questioned if the GEO facility in Baldwin would work for federal prisoners, especially immigration since he said Baldwin has a location problem: No major freeway, no major airport, no way to get out by water.

"That kind of hurts it," he said.

Despite this, he said, he remains optimistic the contract will continue since leadership in the House and the corrections appropriations committee agree the prison is efficient.

Hoekstra's public meeting with local officials begins at 2:45 p.m. at the Lake-Osceola Bank, 790 N. Michigan Ave., Baldwin.

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845-5182, ext.326

# Seniors Fight Off Theft Suspect With Canes, Walkers

## *Woman Being Held; Police Search For Accomplice*

POSTED: 11:50 am EDT August 31, 2005

DETROIT -- A theft suspect was taken into custody Tuesday after a group of women from a local senior community fought her off with canes and walkers, Local 4 reported. Residents at the Van Dyke Center said the woman and another person had been forcing their way into the building on Detroit's east side for weeks and robbing its elderly residents. But Georgia Mitchell decided yesterday to use her cane to stop the woman. "I tapped her with my cane," Mitchell said. "I tried to tear her head off!" Mitchell said that when the woman pushed her, the other residents at the center knocked the alleged thief to the ground and "went to work on her." Police responding to the scene arrested the woman. Authorities recovered wallets, cell phones and jewelry that had been taken from residents. Police said they're now searching for the woman's accomplice.

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**Good deeds: Celebrating unsung heroes**  
**Guardian angel helps Waterford woman**

## **Sterling Heights man donates \$500 after a scam leaves an elderly resident without money to live.**

*By Douglass Dowty The Detroit News*  
*Thursday, September 1, 2005*

**WATERFORD TOWNSHIP** -- A day after an 85-year-old woman was scammed out of \$500, a Sterling Heights man came to the rescue.

LaMont Calhoun, 34, heard about the elderly woman's plight in the media Aug. 13, and empathized with her situation because of his memories of his grandmother.

"I immediately thought about my late grandmother, who raised me," said the owner of Cora Group, a real estate company named after his grandmother, Cora McCartha.

"I thought about helping this woman all night, and woke up the next day thinking about it." He called Waterford police the morning of Aug. 14, and offered to donate \$500 to help the victim, who was on a fixed income of \$600 a month in Social Security.

The woman, a resident of the 300 block of Gateway, was scammed after she discovered two men seal-coating her driveway without her permission. When she asked them to leave, they demanded \$900 for completing work. She tried to explain she hadn't ordered the work, but the men persisted, according to the police report. Eventually, the men convinced her to ride with them to a Bank One at the corner of Elizabeth Lake Road and Highland, where she paid them \$500 in cash from her account. Afterward, they drove her home. She later called the company advertised on the outside of their truck, and was told it didn't do driveway seal coatings. The men were described as 25 to 30 years old. They were driving a red mini pickup truck with Michigan Construction on the side.

After the scam, the woman initially said she would be forced to borrow \$500 from her niece to finish out the month, but had no way of repaying her. She also was taking care of her sister, who is older and had suffered a broken hip.

"It was just terrible when I heard about it," Calhoun said. "I feel great just being able to help someone." A day after he came forward, Calhoun talked to the victim on the phone.

"She told me, 'There's no one else like you in the world,'" he said.

Calhoun said he hopes the unexpected attention will serve as an important reminder to his four children.

"I hope this will help to teach them it's good to help other people," he said.

Sgt. Todd Hasselbach of the Waterford Police said such acts of goodwill are all too rare. "Help like this happens every once in a while," he said. "I hope it would happen more."  
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Op-Ed Columnist

# Curing Health Costs: Let the Sick Suffer

By BOB HERBERT  
The New York Times

Published: September 1, 2005

The word in Tennessee is that Gov. Phil Bredesen, a Democrat, has presidential aspirations. I find that interesting. Perhaps he can run on the success he's had throwing sick people off of Medicaid.

Thanks to Mr. Bredesen's leadership, Tennessee is dumping nearly 200,000 residents, some of them desperately ill, from TennCare, the state's Medicaid program. Cindy Mann, a research professor and executive director of the Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute, concisely characterized the governor's efforts:

"What he's decided to do is save health care costs simply by not giving people health care." How's that for a solution to a tough public policy issue?

What is happening in Tennessee is profoundly cruel. The people being removed from the rolls - some of them disabled, some suffering from such serious illnesses as cancer and heart disease - are mostly working-poor individuals who cannot afford private insurance. They are being left with no coverage and in many instances are in a state of absolute panic.

"People are going to die because of this," said Carolyn Cagle, a widow from Paris, Tenn., whose 34-year-old son, Lloyd, is a diabetic who has already lost part of his right foot. He is being dropped from the program.

Phil Dedrich, a resident of Waynesboro, has also been notified that his coverage is ending. "I am very sick," he said in a statement distributed by opponents of the cuts. "I have severe coronary artery disease, including a 70 percent blockage of my aorta, lung disease, thyroid disease, diabetes, painful neuropathy from the diabetes and high blood pressure."

In addition to the people being dropped from the rolls, benefits are being cut for hundreds of thousands of TennCare participants, and there is a chance that 100,000 more people will lose their coverage next year.

"I'm scared," said Terilyn Gotlieb, a TennCare enrollee whose prescription coverage was reduced sharply. Kidney disease has all but destroyed Ms. Gotlieb's family. She told me her mother, her grandfather, a brother and a sister all died from the disease. Ms. Gotlieb herself underwent a kidney transplant in 2000. She's in constant pain from a broken back she suffered in an auto accident last year, and she's severely depressed.



In a normal month Ms. Gotlieb takes 12 medications, but now TennCare will pay for only 5 and she can't afford the other 7. "I'm scared that if I don't get the right medication, I'm going to end up back on dialysis and lose my kidney I fought so hard to keep," she said. "I could die."

Medicaid was established to provide health coverage for the poor. In the 1990's the TennCare program extended Medicaid benefits to low-income working people who could not otherwise secure health insurance. Among those hailing the program at its inception was Bill Frist, a Tennessee Republican who is now the Senate majority leader. At the time he was the surgical director of the Transplant Center at Vanderbilt University.

Mr. Frist called the program a "bold experiment" and wrote in a newspaper article that "the extension of coverage to working Tennesseans without health insurance is necessary to reduce the need for hospitals to shift these costs to patients who have insurance."

TennCare reduced the number of uninsured residents in the state by one-third and indisputably saved many lives. But the program ran into problems. Parts of it were mismanaged by state officials and by managed care organizations that performed so poorly they either had to be taken over by the state or their contracts were terminated. More insidious is the fact that residents of Tennessee (which limits its state income tax to dividends and interest income) are even less willing than their counterparts in most other states to pay for crucial public services.

So rather than do the heavy lifting necessary to shore up an important and admirable program, Governor Bredesen resorted to the draconian, life-threatening expedient of severing the health coverage of people who have nowhere else to turn.

Perhaps that's what one should expect from a former managed care executive. Governor Bredesen's Web site notes that before entering public service, he "was a successful health care entrepreneur."

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POLICE BEAT

The Ann Arbor News

Thursday, September 1, 2005

## **Police arrest man for taking tip money**

A 45-year-old homeless man was arrested Wednesday after he was seen taking tip money from a table outside a downtown Ann Arbor cafe by Ann Arbor Police Department employees, officials said.

A small group of civilian employees and detectives saw the suspect take cash from a table outside the Cafe Felix, 204 Main St., at about 12:30 p.m., said Detective Sgt. Jim Stephenson. A detective followed the suspect to the Federal Building on Liberty Street where the suspect was arrested without incident. He was later released, pending formal charges.

*Thursday, September 1, 2005*

*Detroit News*

*Letter to the Editor*

## **'It's long past time Michigan workers got a raise'**

The editorial dismissing our plan to give minimum-wage workers their first raise in eight years appears to be a knee-jerk response to the proposal without evidence to support its claims ("Raising the minimum wage will cost jobs for Michigan," Aug. 5).

Minimum-wage increases do not lead to job loss, as the editorial claims; in fact, as noted in the July 31 story "Minimum wage divides workers, bosses, politicians," the 15 states that have raised their minimum wage above the federal level have seen more job growth than those states with wage levels that remain stagnant.

Additionally, raising the minimum wage would not prevent the young and unskilled from "climbing the economic ladder."

As anyone who works a minimum-wage job knows, \$5.15 an hour is a ladder to nowhere. An increase to \$7.15 an hour would give working families an opportunity to climb out of poverty.

One useful statistic in this discussion is that, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 464,000 Michigan workers' lives would immediately be improved by an increase in the minimum wage.

Those workers' families and communities will also get a boost, as they spend money in local businesses to better feed and clothe their kids, and as they save to provide their children and themselves with educational opportunities and a better future.

It's long past time Michigan workers got a raise.

*Rep. Dianne Byrum*

*House Democratic Leader*

*D-Onondaga*

Editorial  
The New York Times

## Life in the Bottom 80 Percent

Published: September 1, 2005

Economic growth isn't what it used to be. In 2004, the economy grew a solid 3.8 percent. But for the fifth straight year, median household income was basically flat, at \$44,389 in 2004, the Census Bureau said Tuesday. That's the longest stretch of income stagnation on record. Economic growth was also no elixir for the 800,000 additional workers who found themselves without health insurance in 2004. Were it not for increased coverage by military insurance and Medicaid, the ranks of the uninsured - now 45.8 million - would be even larger. And 1.1 million more people fell into poverty in 2004, bringing the ranks of poor Americans to 37 million. When President Bush talks about the economy, he invariably boasts about good economic growth. But he doesn't acknowledge what is apparent from the census figures: as the very rich get even richer, their gains can mask the stagnation and deterioration at less lofty income levels. This week's census report showed that income inequality was near all-time highs in 2004, with 50.1 percent of income going to the top 20 percent of households. And additional census data obtained by the Economic Policy Institute show that only the top 5 percent of households experienced real income gains in 2004. Incomes for the other 95 percent of households were flat or falling.

Income inequality is an economic and social ill, but the administration and the Congressional majority don't seem to recognize that. When Congress returns from its monthlong summer vacation next week, two of the leadership's top priorities include renewing the push to repeal the estate tax, which affects only the wealthiest of families, and extending the tax cuts for investment income, which flow largely to the richest Americans. At the other end of the spectrum, lawmakers have stubbornly refused to raise the minimum wage: \$5.15 an hour since 1997. They will also be taking up proposals for deep budget cuts in programs that ameliorate income inequality, like Medicaid, food stamps and federal student loans.

They should be ashamed of themselves.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*September 1, 2005*

## **Governor Granholm Calls for Extradition of Florida Man for Unpaid Child Support**

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today announced that she has initiated proceedings to extradite a Florida man charged with failing to pay more than \$35,000 in child support, a felony crime punishable by four years in prison.

Dennis Jay Quinn of Hudson, Florida, was arrested by law enforcement officials in Pascoe County, Florida in June. In December 1995, Quinn was ordered by the Oakland County Circuit Court in Michigan to pay \$79 per week for the support of his minor child, but has failed to comply. As of February 2005, his unpaid child support obligations totaled \$35,562.96.

“Mr. Quinn has failed to meet his responsibility to support his child, and that has consequences,” Granholm said. “We will use all of the tools at our disposal to ensure that parents provide for their children.”

Upon return to Michigan, Quinn will face prosecution. In Michigan, non-support of a child is a felony punishable by up to four years in prison and/or a \$2,000 fine. Since taking office, Granholm has requested the return, through the extradition process, of more than 100 parents who have failed to support their children as ordered by courts in Michigan.

Under the Uniform Criminal Extradition Act, the power to demand extradition of a fugitive who has fled from justice in Michigan and taken refuge in another state is vested in the governor. After receiving extradition documents, Florida officials can issue a warrant delivering the fugitive into the custody of Michigan authorities.

To encourage parents to pay their past due child support, the state is offering an amnesty period beginning October 1, 2005. Under the new law, parents who owe past due child support in Michigan will have a 90-day window to avoid state criminal and civil enforcement penalties. Penalties that have already been initiated will be waived with the exception of felony prosecutions or in circumstances where a delinquent parent has already been arrested due to failure or refusal to pay past due child support. The amnesty program does not affect current support obligations. The amnesty program was established by Public Act 584 of 2004 and sponsored by Rep. Alexander Lipsey.

For more information regarding the amnesty program, parents can contact their local Friend of the Court office, call 1-866-540-0008, or visit [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs) and click on “Child Support.”

**###**

# Toys for Tots needs new space to sort gifts

Thursday, September 01, 2005

By Susan K. Treutler  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Muskegon's Santa Claus is without a workshop, and the elves are getting antsy.

Santa, in the form of Muskegon County's Toys for Tots, is desperately in need of space where long tables can be set up and used for sorting holiday gifts for children from poor families.

The Muskegon group, which is affiliated with the national Toys for Tots Foundation and West Michigan Toys for Tots in Kentwood, consists of just six people.

Organizer Margaret Jandt said all toys donated in Muskegon County stay in Muskegon County.

But without a place to work, the program would have to be moved back to Kentwood.

Toys for the coming holiday season are stored in a donated trailer and organizers are looking for a place to work.

The inconvenience the group faces is not new. Finding a workshop has been a problem throughout their 15 years of volunteerism.

"Over the years, we have worked in several places: The Vietnam Veterans' Building, an old ice-cream freezer behind the Schultz house, a vacant store in a strip mall, and for the past two years a few classrooms on the top floor of the old Western Michigan Christian High School," said Beth Ackley, who has been with the group since its inception.

They knew in March they'd have to move out of the school because the rooms were to be rented to a charter school. And Toys for Tots volunteers have been unsuccessfully searching for a home since then.

"Once again, we are gypsies," Ackley said.

"We desperately need a place that is large enough for many tables as we bring in and sort the toys that we collect," Ackley said.

Many volunteer groups help complete that task.

"It is a huge undertaking," Ackley said.

Toys donated by school and civic groups and collected in bins at 100 sites such as stores, are distributed to Mission For Area People, Salvation Army, Love Inc., AIDS Resources, and to churches and individuals.

Last year, the program distributed 8,000 gifts for Muskegon County teens and children.

The group needs at least 2,000 square feet, preferably in greater Muskegon, and ideally would have permanent use of the space.

They also would like a place that "is not real cold."

"We have worked in places that are 30 degrees," Jandt said. "We could help a little bit with heat, but not much."